

these payments, reimbursing hospitals about \$4.2 billion over five years. This is critical for the financial security of our rural hospitals in East Texas. Patients' care options will be preserved with this provision, and the quality of care will be preserved.

The budget bill also contains important provisions which would allow satellite TV viewers access to local programming. Until now, satellite providers have been barred from transmitting the signals of local broadcast stations back to subscribers in the same local market. This legislation, however, contains important provisions of the Satellite Home View Act, which recently passed the House with overwhelming support.

In addition to allowing satellite carriers to transmit local broadcast signals back to subscribers in the same local market, this legislation would also eliminate the current 90-day waiting period before cable subscribers can switch to satellite service. These provisions are good news for satellite viewers who have been unfairly left deprived of access to local weather, news, and programming.

With regard to dairy, the agreement includes policy provisions that direct the USDA to implement its proposed "Option 1-A" Class 1 differential milk pricing structure. By doing so, the measure blocks portions of USDA's preferred milk marketing orders reform plan (Option 1-B) and essentially preserves the status quo in milk pricing for Texas.

This is a victory for Texas dairy farmers. If Option 1-B had been implemented, Texas dairy farmers would have lost \$56 million in producer income. With this agreement, we are preventing that loss and preserving the East Texas dairy farm.

The budget also contains a number of important Democratic victories, including funding for 100,000 new teachers, after school programs, Head Start, school construction, and the COPS program. These victories also include extensions of important tax credits for research and development, the Work Incentive tax credit, Welfare to Work credit, and Alternative Minimum Tax relief for individuals.

This year we have also given our service men and women a pay raise and provided funding for increased workload at Red River Army Depot. Specifically, the FY00 budget appropriates \$384 million for upgrading the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. Finally, this bill puts aside \$147 billion for reducing the national debt and helping ensure that future generations can share in the economic prosperity we are now experiencing as a nation.

Although I am pleased with the positive aspects of this bill, I am deeply disturbed by its more troubling provisions. Those include an arbitrary across-the-board cut upon which Republicans have insisted. Instead of eliminating the irresponsible member earmarks that load up this budget with unnecessary spending or cutting Member pay raises, Republicans have opted for a damaging, indiscriminate across-the-board cut. Moreover, they rely on accounting gimmicks to disguise the real spending in this bill, and they tell us this budget won't break the caps. This bill has not been scored, so we have no choice but to accept Republican claims that it won't dip into the Social Security trust fund.

I find the Republicans' failure to cut the Congressional pay raise particularly unconscionable. This bill would actually exempt the Congressional pay raise from the across-the-

board cut. This provision is extremely upsetting, considering that Congress twice voted against this exemption.

Republican tactics throughout the budget process have produced an imperfect bill. Their unwillingness to negotiate with Democrats from the beginning is the reason behind this 11th hour budget bill. Unfortunately, Republicans put off budget negotiations until the very last minute in favor of partisan rhetoric and have thereby prevented Congress from passing a Patients' Bill of Rights, funding a Medicare prescription drug benefit for seniors, increasing the minimum wage for working Americans, and providing meaningful tax relief for families.

These realities make it especially difficult for me to cast my vote in favor of this bill. The most troubling consequence of this bill is the potentially detrimental effect of the across-the-board cut on veterans' healthcare. I will vote for the Motion to Recommit for this reason, and for all the other reasons I have cited, in hopes that these problems can be addressed before final passage of the bill.

However, should the Motion to Recommit fail, I will support final passage because, although it is imperfect, this bill is a product of lengthy negotiations. I accept that negotiation requires compromise, and not everyone will agree on every aspect of a compromise. All in all, I support this bill because, despite its shortcomings, it is good news for the people of East Texas.

BERNARDO FORT-BRESCIA AND LAURINDA SPEAR INDUCTED TO THE INTERIOR DESIGN MAGAZINE HALL OF FAME

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 22, 1999

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Bernardo Fort-Brescia and his wife, Laurinda Spear, on being inducted as members of the 1999 Interior Design Magazine Hall of Fame.

In 1977, Bernardo and Laurinda, both graduates of Ivy League architectural schools, founded the Miami based Arquitectonica which has been making headlines with a brand of unconventional modernism that combines clarity and formal rigor with unusual daring in color and wit. The firm's designs have won numerous awards from the American Institute of Architects and Progressive Architecture.

Bernardo and Laurinda have worked on many memorable designs, including the Miami City Ballet headquarters in Miami Beach, the American Airlines Arena in Miami, and the future Westin New York at Times Square on New York's 42nd Street. These projects have been featured in many magazines and professional journals including Time, Newsweek, Domus, and Architectural Digest. Bernardo and Laurinda have lectured around the world and their work had been exhibited in many prestigious museums and galleries throughout the Western Hemisphere and Europe.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Bernard Fort-Brescia, FAIA and Laurinda Spear, FAIA on their induction to the 1999 Interior Design Magazine Hall of Fame.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2116, VETERANS MILLENNIUM HEALTH CARE AND BENEFITS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2116, the Veterans Millennium Health Care Act of 1996. As a conferee on this legislation, I am grateful the Senate accepted one particular provision, my proposal to add bronchiolo alveolar carcinoma to the Department of Veterans Affairs presumption list for radiogenic cancers.

For the last ten years, I have worked to add this lung cancer to the VA's presumption list for service-connected veterans. During the 104th and 105th Congresses, the House passed my legislation to add this cancer to the VA's presumption list. This year, we have convinced our Senate colleagues of the need to put this provision into law because of the VA's continual denial of most claims by atomic veterans and their survivors.

Bronchiolo alveolar carcinoma is not considered a smoker's cancer. During a recent class action lawsuit in the state of Florida, the jury specifically excluded bronchiolo alveolar carcinoma from the list of lung cancers compensable due to smoking. Furthermore, the National Research Council cited Department of Energy studies in the BEIR V report stating that "bronchiolo alveolar carcinoma is the most common cause of delayed death from inhaled plutonium 239."

I know of this firsthand because I have been working with Joan McCarthy, a New Jersey resident, who lost her husband, Tom, to bronchiolo alveolar carcinoma in 1981. Tom had served as the navigator on the U.S.S. *McKinley* which participated in Operation Wigwam, an underwater atomic test in the Pacific that produced a surge of mist which Tom inhaled. Twenty-five years later, Tom died of lung cancer, a father and husband who was only in his early forties. Passage of the Veterans Millennium Health Care Act today will add this cancer to the VA's presumption list and thus ensure that Joan McCarthy and other veterans and their widows receive the compensation which they need and deserve.

I am also proud of this bill's long-term care provisions for our nation's veterans. It reflects the months of heavy lifting that the House Veterans' Affairs Committee has done on this issue as America's veterans community gets older and consequently needs quality health care.

Another provision which I authored as free standing legislation and is now in the conference report is a respite care provision. For the first time, we are giving the VA the ability to contract out for respite care services. Until now, if a veteran's care giver, be it his spouse or adult child, needed a short break, their only recourse was to wait for a bed to be made available at either a VA or state nursing home. The extra burden of transporting the veterans almost makes this self-defeating and it is witnessed by the fact that only 232 cases of respite care were provided by the VA during the 1998 fiscal year.

The need for respite care cannot be underestimated. A few years ago, my wife, Marie,